
Alternative Preparation for Licensure Policy

The Background:

The dual purpose of alternative teacher preparation is to attract highly qualified individuals who bring maturity and a variety of work experiences to the teaching profession, and to prepare them for success in Tennessee schools.

The State Board of Education first adopted a policy on alternative licensure about ten years ago. Prior to that, and continuing today, the state has had rules governing alternative licenses. Tennessee has considerable experience in using the various alternative licenses and has learned a great deal from those experiences. This document represents the thinking of a large number of contributors from diverse constituencies—institutions of higher education, school systems, various organizations, and Department and Board staff—as well as several working committees with representatives from all groups.

In essence, the revised policy streamlines the process for recruiting, admitting, enrolling, and licensing qualified individuals and will prepare them to teach successfully. Specifically, the policy:

- Provides greater consistency across programs;
- Provides clear guidelines for identifying content knowledge competency;
- Defines core professional competencies and limits the scope of the preparation programs;
- Identifies which competencies need to be addressed first (orientation component);
- Identifies which competencies will be addressed later (professional development component);
- Requires a partnership between institutions of higher education and local school systems;
- Provides for school systems to recommend candidates for licensure;
- Allows successful teaching on an alternative license to count toward apprentice licensure and to count in lieu of student teaching;
- Provides for a three-year limit on the time an individual can teach on an alternative license.

The document contains several parts. They include:

- An overview providing a comparison of Tennessee's current and proposed policies,
- The policy itself: Alternative Preparation for Licensure Policy, p. 1,
- Appendix A: Alternative Licensure Application and Renewal Process, p. 8, and

- Appendix B: Professional Education Core Competencies, p. 10.

The draft has been circulated widely for review and input over a period of a year. The Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Certification has reviewed this document and suggested amendments at three of its meetings.

Minor language revisions have been made to clarify the intent of the policy regarding the following: scope of the program; candidate application to institutions of higher education; assessment of applicants' previous experience for purposes of determining a program of study; alternative licensure renewal requirements; allowing three years (instead of two) of successful teaching on an alternative license to substitute for apprentice years; and strengthening the wording of the core competency on assessment.

The Recommendation:

The Advisory Council on Teacher Education and Certification recommends approval of this policy on final reading. The SBE staff concurs in this recommendation.

Alternative Preparation for Licensure Policy Comparison of Tennessee's Current and Proposed Policies April 2006

Overview

The proposed revision will eliminate current alternate A, C, and E licenses and replace them with two new alternative licenses, type I and type II, effective for teaching in the 2007-2008 school year.

- The type I license is similar to the current alternate C license, requiring a pre-planned program of study, some of which must be completed before the onset of teaching.
- The type II license combines aspects of the current alternate A and E licenses, providing an “emergency hire” option for persons with a baccalaureate degree and content knowledge in the anticipated teaching field.
- Current Interim B and D licenses and programs are not impacted by this proposal.

Significant differences between current and proposed alternative licensure options

Content knowledge is required for admission to the proposed type I and type II programs, and may be met with an appropriate academic major, a 24 semester hour equivalent, or by successful completion of required Praxis II content examinations. Applicants who do not meet one of these criteria will be served through existing post-baccalaureate licensure programs.

Alternatively licensed teachers must make adequate annual progress toward completion of the program of study in both type I and type II programs. Type I and type II programs of study may not exceed 24 semester hours—except for early childhood, elementary, middle grades and special education—and must include an orientation component and a professional development component designed to address state professional education standards. The orientation component addresses the critical knowledge and skills that teachers need to have in order to begin teaching.

- Teachers on type I licenses must complete the orientation component prior to the onset of teaching, typically through a summer institute.
- Teachers on type II licenses must complete the orientation component prior to licensure renewal for the second year.

A teacher may not teach on an alternate license for more than three years and may not extend the period of alternative licensure by transferring among licensure types, teaching positions, or employers.

Teachers must be mentored throughout the full tenure of alternative licensure. Effective mentoring, careful evaluation by the school system using the *Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth* and analysis of student achievement will substantially enhance retention and continued professional development of alternatively licensed teachers.

Institutions of higher education must partner with one or more school systems to develop type I and type II programs to be approved through the state program approval process. Proposals for program approval will specify whether type I or type II programs or both program types will be offered and which endorsement areas will be offered.

The Tennessee Department of Education will maintain an alternative licensure registry or clearinghouse identifying approved alternative licensure programs, school systems with current and anticipated teaching vacancies, as well as applicants to and participants in alternative licensure programs.

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The dual purpose of alternative teacher preparation is to attract highly qualified individuals who bring maturity and a variety of work experiences to the teaching profession, and to prepare them for success in Tennessee schools.

I. Admissions/Eligibility

- A. **Criteria.** All candidates must have at least a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education and must meet content knowledge requirements. The criteria for admission, including test requirements, will be consistent with those required for admission to post-baccalaureate licensure programs. Applicants already holding a full Tennessee teaching license are not eligible for alternate licensure.
- B. **All Teaching Areas.** Candidates are eligible to participate in alternative licensure programs in all teaching endorsement areas.
- C. **Process.** Candidates seeking to teach under an alternative license may inquire directly to institutions of higher education or to local school systems. Candidates may also address inquiries to the State Department of Education, which will maintain registries of institutions of higher education with approved alternative licensure programs, school systems with immediate and anticipated needs for qualified applicants, and applicants enrolled in alternative licensure programs. The employing school system will submit completed applications for alternative licenses, with supporting documentation, to the state licensure office.
- D. **Types of Alternative Licensure.** The following two types of alternative licenses are available in all teaching licensure areas:
 - 1. **Alternative Licensure Type I.** The type I alternative license typically applies to candidates who enroll in summer terms and complete the orientation component of the core prior to beginning employment in the fall. The candidate will have met content knowledge requirements, will have been admitted to an approved type I licensure program, will have completed the orientation component of the professional education core, and will have obtained an "intent to hire" statement and recommendation for the type I license from the employing school system in collaboration with an institution of higher education approved to offer type I licenses. The candidate may or may not have yet completed all required licensure exams. Type I program participants who have not attained an "intent to hire" statement from a school system upon completion of the orientation component of the program may transition to a post-baccalaureate

licensure program for licensure or they may continue to seek employment under an alternative license type I.

2. **Alternative Licensure Type II.** This type of license is applicable for candidates who are late summer or mid-year hires and were therefore unable to complete the orientation component of the professional education core prior to employment. The candidate will have met content knowledge requirements, will have obtained an “intent to hire” statement and recommendation for the type II license from a school system. (Deleted last phrase in this sentence). The candidate may or may not have yet completed all required licensure exams. Before the end of the school year, the candidate will provide the director of schools with evidence of application to an approved licensure program. Candidates who are pursuing licensure in early childhood education (PreK-K, PreK-3, PreK-4), elementary education (K-6, K-8), middle grades education (4-8, 5-8), and special education (K-12) must provide evidence of admittance to or enrollment in an approved alternative licensure program.

II. Preparation

Type I and type II alternative licensure programs will include an admission and retention process, a professional education core, a mentoring and professional development system, and a performance assessment process.

- A. **Admission and Retention Process.** Alternative licensure programs will include an admissions and retention process to verify eligibility, content knowledge, and progress toward program completion.
 1. **Content Knowledge.** Candidates must have an acceptable major in the endorsement area or document that they have at least 24 semester hours in the teaching content area, or verify that they have passed the required Praxis II content exam(s) for the endorsement areas sought. If they document that they have met the content knowledge requirement in one of these ways, additional course work in the academic major will not be required.
 2. **Annual Progress.** Teachers holding alternative licenses must demonstrate satisfactory annual progress toward completion of all licensure requirements. Teachers may teach on an alternative license for no more than three years. This three-year limit may not be exceeded by switching between alternative licensure types I and II or by changing teaching positions or school systems.
- B. **Professional Education Core.** Alternative licensure programs will include a professional education core incorporating the knowledge and skills specified for professional education as well as continuing

professional growth and development during the full period of alternative licensure.

1. **Essential Competencies.** The professional education core will address the eleven essential competencies listed at the end of this document. They include: the orientation component incorporating competencies A through D and the professional development component incorporating competencies E through K, accompanied by mentoring, formative and summative assessment, and continuing professional preparation. In designing a program of study for individual candidates, the institution of higher education will assess the candidate's background by examining the candidate's transcripts, providing opportunities to test out of courses, reviewing prior experiences, and administering any other appropriate assessments.
 - a. **Type I License.** Candidates teaching on a type I license must complete the orientation component prior to employment as teacher of record.
 - b. **Type II License.** Candidates teaching as a teacher of record on a type II license must complete the orientation component prior to renewing the license for the second school year. Teachers employed on a type II alternative license must address the competencies contained in the orientation component first, regardless of when the program is begun. Institutions, in cooperation with local school systems, may develop flexible means for delivering both components of the professional education core.
2. **Program Planning and Description.** Higher education, P-12 personnel, and others will collaboratively plan, deliver and assess the program to ensure that candidates can demonstrate the competencies. The program will include faculty from one or more institutions of higher education and one or more school systems.

Alternative licensure programs may include traditional or web-based for-credit courses, and non-credit seminars, workshops, or on-line courses, so long as they do not exceed the maximum number of credit hours and so long as the candidate demonstrates the eleven established competencies. If a candidate cannot demonstrate competence in a specific area of the professional education core, the candidate or the program may request additional instruction or other remediation or support.

The programs that are offered for credit will consist of no more than 24 credit hours in professional education, except for candidates who are pursuing licensure in early childhood education (PreK-K, PreK-3, PreK-4), elementary education (K-6, K-8), middle grades education (4-8, 5-8), and special education (K-

12), who may be required to complete no more than 30 credit hours, including instruction that addresses the knowledge and skills specified for the endorsement sought.

In programs with components that lead to college credit, the expectation is that coursework or the equivalent will be approximately 18 semester hours of professional education; additional components may allow for mentoring and additional support for candidates who need it.

3. **Annual Progress.** Participants whose period of alternative licensure extends beyond one year will demonstrate adequate annual progress in completing courses, workshops, seminars or on-line credit specifically aligned with the professional education core competencies.
4. **Degree.** The institution of higher education will specify the relationship of alternative licensure course work, if any, to available graduate degree programs.

C. **Mentoring and Professional Development System.** Alternative licensure programs will include a mentoring and professional development system linked to performance outcomes and teaching effectiveness.

1. **Trained Mentors.** Throughout the alternative licensure period, teachers on type I and type II licenses will receive the support of one or more mentor teachers, who will have received training. The teacher and the mentor will receive ongoing professional development through a program collaboratively planned by the collaborating school system(s) and institution(s) of higher education.
2. **Mentoring Responsibilities.** The school system in which the teacher is employed must make a commitment to carry out the program and provide mentoring support for the teacher. The mentor(s) will meet regularly with teachers to demonstrate effective classroom instruction, observe the teacher, coach the teacher, provide continuity with pre-service training, provide direction related to content knowledge and pedagogy, and provide formative evaluation. Mentoring will be collaboratively planned by the participating school system(s) and the institution(s) of higher education for the duration of the alternative licensure period.
3. **Duration of Mentoring and Professional Development.** Support from mentors and other professional development will be at least the equivalent of two days per month per teacher, averaged across the period of alternate licensure. Mentoring and professional development will continue across the full period of alternative licensure.

4. **Mentor Eligibility.** Mentors will have recent successful P-12 teaching experience and, if possible, will be currently licensed in the endorsement area of the teacher. Mentors may be employees of the school system or the participating institution(s) of higher education. Mentors may be current teachers who are reassigned as mentors for a portion of their contract or they may be full-time mentors.
- D. **Performance assessment process.** Alternative licensure programs will include a collaborative assessment process that monitors and evaluates teacher and program effectiveness.
 1. **Assessment and professional development.** School systems will assess the effectiveness of the teacher using the *Tennessee Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth* and will develop “just-in-time” professional development and support based up analysis of evaluations.
 2. **Program Effectiveness.** Collaborating school systems and institutions of higher education will document and assess teacher, mentoring, and program effectiveness throughout the period of alternative licensure.

III. **Teacher Evaluation and Apprentice or Professional Licensure**

- A. **Teacher Evaluation.** The principal, or designee, will be responsible for evaluation of the teaching performance of the teacher.
- B. **Apprentice or Professional Licensure.** The teacher will be eligible for apprentice or professional licensure upon the following:
 1. Recommendation by the school system for the apprentice or professional license in accordance with local evaluation procedures. Recommendation for apprentice or professional licensure by the school system does not require re-employment;
 2. Verification of successful completion of the professional education core by the institution(s) of higher education;
 3. Verification that required licensure examinations have been passed; and
 4. Submission by the teacher of the completed application for apprentice or professional licensure to the Department of Education, including all required official transcripts and verifications noted above.
- C. **Substitution for Apprentice License Experience and Student Teaching.** Each year of successful teaching on an alternative license will

substitute for one year of apprentice licensure experience and will count as apprentice level licensure for purposes of promotion to the professional license. Successful teaching on an alternative license will substitute for student teaching in accordance with the rules of the State Board of Education.

IV. Alternative Licensure Program

- A. **Collaborative Planning.** The institution(s) of higher education and school system(s), and others, will collaboratively develop an alternative licensure program plan which provides information regarding admissions procedures, program format for the professional education core, mentoring support and training of mentors, continuing professional development and study throughout the alternative licensure period, the continuing preparation program throughout the alternative licensure period (as needed), how adequate annual progress will be determined, and whether transfer students or credits will be accepted.
- B. **Teaching Endorsements.** The plan will identify which teaching endorsements will be supported by the program and will designate participation in either type I or type II alternate licensure programs, or both. Institutions of higher education are eligible for alternative licensure programs in licensure endorsements for which they have current approval to offer traditional licensure programs, except that institutions approved for any secondary education licensure program may submit proposals for alternative licensure in all secondary endorsements.
- C. **Support for the Program.** The institution(s) of higher education and school system(s) will provide information in the plan regarding how the funding for the following expenses will be provided:
 - 1. Tuition or costs for the professional education core and for higher education involvement in collaborative mentoring during the period of alternative licensure;
 - 2. Mentoring, including training of mentors, stipends for mentors, released time, and substitute teacher reimbursement; and
 - 3. Salary of the teacher.

V. Program Approval

- A. **Approval by Department and Board.** The Department of Education will review all proposed programs for alternative licensure and will recommend them to the State Board of Education for approval. An institution of higher education or a consortium of institutions together with one or more school systems will submit proposed programs. Institutions may submit proposed programs for one or both types of

alternative licenses. The Department will conduct site visits of such programs either in conjunction with or in addition to regularly scheduled program approval visits.

- B. **Reporting.** Approved programs must submit annual reports on alternative licensure to the Department of Education as part of their regular annual report. At minimum, reports should include applicants enrolled and program completers by type and by licensure field, and the cooperating school systems. Praxis II test scores or pass rates for teachers on alternative licenses will not be included in annual reports for state or federal accountability purposes.

C. **Effective dates:**

1. Candidates will meet the requirements for type I and type II alternative licensure no later than school year 2007-08.
2. Institutions will submit proposals for conditional approval to the Department of Education no later than February 1, 2007. Institutions that wish to implement new programs earlier are encouraged to do so and to submit proposals earlier.
3. New Alternative A, C, and E licenses will not be issued for school years after 2006-07. Alternative A, C, and E licenses will not be renewed for school years after 2008-09.

VI. Program Review

The Department of Education will evaluate annually the alternative licensure program regarding teacher recruitment, admission, preparation, placement, mentoring, performance, and retention; and will track the program participants for five years. The Department will report the results of the program evaluation annually to the State Board of Education.

Appendix A: Alternative Licensure Application and Renewal Process

The employing school system will submit applications for alternative licenses to the Office of Teacher Licensing, with supporting documentation.

A. Application to alternative licensure preparation programs.

1. Candidates will apply for admission to type I and type II alternative licensure programs at teacher preparation programs approved to offer such programs for the endorsement sought. General education core requirements shall be considered as met through the candidate's baccalaureate degree program.
2. Candidates will document that they have met the content knowledge requirement in one of the following ways: having an acceptable major in the endorsement area, having at least 24 semester hours in the teaching content area, or passing the Praxis II examination in the content area for the endorsement(s) sought.

B. Application for initial issuance of an alternative license.

1. When applying for initial issuance of a type I or type II alternative license, the school system must submit to the Office of Teacher Licensing an application including:
 - a. Type I License.
 - i. Verification by the institution of higher education that content knowledge requirements have been met;
 - ii. Verification by the institution of higher education of admission to or enrollment in the alternate licensure program;
 - iii. A statement signed by a Tennessee director of schools stating intent to employ the candidate; and,
 - iv. Official copies of the candidate's college transcripts.
 - b. Type II License.
 - i. Verification by the institution of higher that content knowledge requirements have been met;
 - ii. A statement signed by a Tennessee director of schools stating intent to employ the candidate; and,
 - iii. Official copies of the candidate's college transcripts and/or relevant Praxis II content examinations.

2. When applying for initial issuance of a type I or type II alternative license in early childhood education (PreK-K, PreK-3, PreK-4), elementary education (K-6, K-8), middle grades education (4-8, 5-8), or special education, the school system must provide a letter from the college licensure officer verifying that the candidate has been admitted to a teacher preparation program for the endorsement area sought and has made adequate academic progress as prescribed by the institution.
3. When applying for initial issuance of a type I alternative license, the candidate must have been accepted into an approved alternative licensure program at one of the participating Tennessee higher education institutions and must have successfully completed the orientation component of the professional education core prior to becoming employed on the type I license.
4. When applying for initial issuance of a type II alternative license, the school system must provide verification from an institution of higher education that the candidate
 - a. Has an acceptable major for the endorsement sought, or has documented 24 semester hours in the teaching content area, or has passed the Praxis II content area examination(s) for the endorsement sought; and
 - b. Meets program admission requirements or is enrolled in the first available offering of the orientation component of the professional education core.

C. **Renewal of Alternative License.** In order to renew an alternative license, the school system must provide a recommendation in accordance with local evaluation procedures and submit verification of the teacher's adequate progress in the program of study by the institution.

1. Prior to the first renewal, the teacher holding the type I alternative license must have successfully completed the orientation component of the professional education core and completed the equivalent of six hours of additional course work (unless all course work requirements have been met), and passed the Praxis II content area exam(s) for the endorsement sought.
2. Prior to the first renewal, the teacher holding the type II alternative license must have successfully completed the orientation component of the professional education core (unless all course work requirements have been met), and must have taken the Praxis content area exam(s) for the endorsement sought and must be enrolled in or admitted to an approved alternative licensure program.
3. The alternate license may be renewed no more than two times. The teacher must successfully complete the entire professional education core before receiving an apprentice license. A teacher may not teach on

an alternative license for more than three years and may not extend the period of alternative licensure by transferring among licensure types, teaching positions or employers.

Appendix B: Professional Education Core Competencies

Alternative licensure programs may include traditional or web-based for-credit courses, on-line courses, and non-credit seminars or workshops, so long as they do not exceed the maximum number of credit hours and so long as the candidate demonstrates competency in the eleven competencies noted below. The program of study must be organized to address these competencies in clearly defined orientation and professional development components.

Orientation Component (A through D below). The teacher will:

- A. Know, understand, and use the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline(s) they teach and can create learning experiences that develop student competence in the subject matter.**

Outcomes

1. Teachers demonstrate a broad general understanding of the major concepts of the discipline they teach.
2. Teachers create interdisciplinary learning experiences that allow students to integrate knowledge, skills, and methods of inquiry from several related subject areas.
3. Teachers create opportunities for students with disabilities and those with varied cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds to participate in the general curriculum.

- B. Understand and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills in students.**

Outcomes

1. Teachers use multiple teaching and learning strategies in active learning opportunities to promote the development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance capabilities in the content areas.
2. Teachers use reading comprehension and writing strategies in the content area and assist students in applying mathematics concepts to subject content.
3. Teachers use a wide variety of resources and methods to promote student learning.

- C. Use an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation.**

Outcomes

1. Teachers create a learning environment that is inclusive and supports positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation for all students.
2. Teachers organize and manage resources such as time, space, facilities, technology, activities, instructional assistants, and volunteers to engage all students in productive tasks and maximize the amount of class time spent in learning.
3. Teachers create a positive, inclusive classroom of mutual respect and support, and inquiry.

D. Plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goal.

Outcomes

1. Teachers identify long-range instructional goals, sequence short-range instructional objectives, and develop units and daily lessons that target these goals and objectives.
2. Teachers align goals, objectives, units and daily lessons with Tennessee curriculum standards, national standards and student performance indicators.

Professional Development Component (E through K below). The teacher will:

E. Understand how students learn and develop and provide learning opportunities that support student intellectual, social and personal development.

Outcomes

1. Teachers understand how learning occurs—how all students construct knowledge and acquire skills—and are able to provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development
2. When making instructional decisions, teachers draw upon an in-depth knowledge of developmental progression in student physical, social, emotional, moral, and cognitive domains and recognize that students with disabilities may exhibit greater individual variation and that a disability often influences development and functioning in more than one area.
3. Teachers use this knowledge to optimize learning opportunities for each student.

F. Understand how students differ in their approaches to learning and create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.

Outcomes

1. Teachers understand and identify differences in student approaches to learning and performance.
2. Teachers design instruction and adapt instructional techniques for all students within the broader context of their families, cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic classes, languages, communities, peer/social groups and exceptional learning needs.
3. Teachers create a learning community which is inclusive and in which individual differences are respected.

G. Use knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration and supportive interaction in the classroom.

Outcomes

1. Teachers understand language development, the role of language in learning, and how culture, gender, and exceptional learning needs affect communication in the classroom.
2. Teachers recognize effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques and use them to support **all** students learning.

H. Know, understand and use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate and ensure the continuing intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.

Outcomes

1. Teachers understand the characteristics, uses, advantages and limitations of different types of assessments for evaluating student learning.
2. Teachers understand state and federal accountability requirements.
3. Teachers select, construct and use appropriate formal and informal assessment strategies and instruments; they analyze and use student performance information when making instructional decisions.
4. Teachers develop and maintain useful records of student work and communicate progress to students, parents and other colleagues.
5. Teachers collaborate with special education teachers and others to plan and design accommodations, modifications, adaptations or alternate assessments, based on the results of individual assessments.

I. Continually evaluate the effects of their choices and actions on others (students, parents and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seek out opportunities to grow professionally.

Outcomes

1. Teachers reflect on their teaching practices by continually evaluating the effect their instruction has on all students.
2. Teachers monitor teaching strategies and behavior in relation to student success and use the information to modify and revise instruction.
3. Teachers continually examine their teaching performance within the context of state and local standards and federal and state accountability requirements.
4. Teachers read professional literature, participate in professional organizations, and use other resources to support their continuing professional development.
5. Teachers know their legal and ethical responsibilities and use knowledge of educational policy, organizational, historical, and professional dimensions of classrooms and schools to guide their professional behavior.

J. Foster relationships with school colleagues, parents and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

Outcomes

1. Teachers consult with families and teachers, and collaborate with other professionals within the school and within community agencies to foster student learning.
2. Teachers participate in collegial activities designed to make the entire school a productive learning community.
3. Teachers act as advocates for all students, advise them, recognize student problems, and seek additional help as needed and appropriate.
4. Teachers understand schools as organizations within the larger community and effectively communicate school goals and accomplishments to the community and general public.

K. Use technology and technology based resources to facilitate developmentally appropriate student learning, to enhance their professional growth and productivity, and effectively use and manage all technology available to them and explore uses of emerging resources, promoting the equitable, ethical and legal use of technology resources.

Outcomes

1. Teachers use technology and technology based resources to facilitate developmentally appropriate student learning.
2. Teachers use technology to enhance their professional growth and productivity
3. Teachers effectively use and manage all technology available to them and explore uses of emerging resources.
4. Teachers promote the equitable, ethical and legal use of technology resources.